

**SUMMARY OF THE
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING
February 4, 2000**

The Accrediting Authority Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Friday February 4, 2000, at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. John P. Anderson of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Division of Laboratories. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B.

INTRODUCTION

Mr. John Anderson, Chairman, opened the meeting and requested that members refer to the agenda he had provided them prior to the teleconference. He reported that Ms. Jackie Sample of the US Department of Defense was expected to participate in the discussion of the proposed addition of Section 1.5.3.1 to Chapter 1 of the NELAC Standards.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

- In support of and to explain the proposal made at NELAC Vi from the Department of Defense and other Federal agencies to specifically prohibit Federal agencies from accrediting non-governmental laboratories, Ms. Jackie Sample of the Department of Defense joined the teleconference. The Federal agencies' concerns are twofold. First, they are concerned that if Federal agencies are allowed to accredit non-governmental laboratories their resources might be insufficient to carry out the work. Secondly, they are concerned that any laboratory doing contractual work for a Federal agency might in some way gain a competitive advantage if that agency is a NELAP-recognized accrediting authority. Even though the committee did not feel strongly that such language in the standards was necessary, the committee agreed to add Section 6.2.1 (h) and to modify Sections 6.2.1 (a) and 6.2.2 to incorporate this proposal into the NELAC standards.
- A proposal was discussed that would allow state accrediting authorities to negotiate amongst themselves as to which accrediting authority would perform laboratory accreditation functions when a particular accrediting authority may not have NELAP recognition for all of the fields of testing for which a laboratory is seeking accreditation. The provisions of this proposal also would apply if the circumstances of a particular situation might make it more efficient for one NELAP-recognized accrediting authority to act on behalf of another. The committee agreed to add the following at new Section 6.3.3.1.3 (c):

“Another NELAP-recognized accrediting authority may perform laboratory accreditation functions on behalf of a NELAP-recognized primary accrediting authority. Such an

arrangement does not require a signed contract or other similar type of binding document and does not require approval by the NELAP Director.”

- In response to a discussion at the AA Committee’s meeting at NELAC VI and a follow-up written proposal received from Ms. Ann Marie Allen of the MA Department of Environmental Protection, the committee discussed the need for including at Section 6.4.2 (c) language to assure that NELAP assessment teams evaluating applicant accrediting authorities do not have access to sensitive or confidential documents that are part of a record of an ongoing legal proceeding. The committee felt that it would be important for the NELAP assessment team to have access to all other records and documents necessary to evaluate the degree of compliance of the applicant accrediting authority with the NELAC standards. The committee agreed to propose at NELAC VI the following revised language for Section 6.4.2 c):

“The NELAP assessment team shall have access to all records of the accrediting authority's environmental laboratory accreditation program that are necessary to determine compliance with the NELAC standards. An accrediting authority shall not be required to give the NELAP assessment team access to sensitive confidential documents that are part of the record of an ongoing legal proceeding.”

- The Committee continued its discussion started at NELAC VI regarding the requirement at Section 6.5 that all applicants for NELAP recognition as an accrediting authority applying after July 1, 2000, meet all requirements for NELAP recognition at the time of application. It was felt that some accrediting authorities might be discouraged from seeking NELAP recognition if the two-year grace period for meeting all NELAP requirements that necessitate legislative or rule-making actions were eliminated. To accommodate this change, the committee agreed to propose to NELAP VI that Section 6.5 (a) be modified and that Sections 6.5 (d) and (e) be deleted.
- For the ongoing discussion regarding membership on the Accrediting Authority Review Board and the procedure for nominating and appointing individuals to the Board, Ms. Jeanne Hankins joined the meeting. Ms. Hankins described the legal considerations regarding membership on Federal advisory boards, and how those requirements impacted on the various proposals the NELAC Accrediting Authority and the Program Policy and Structure Committees were considering. The Committee decided to not discuss this issue further at this time. They elected to wait till better guidance was available as to legal questions and to discuss this issue further with the Program Policy and Structure Committee at NELAC VI.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at about 3:15 p.m. EST.

**ACTION ITEMS
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2000**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Mr. Anderson was directed to make the agreed-upon proposed changes to Chapter 6 and forward a revised document containing struck-out and underlined text to NELAC headquarters.	April 25, 2000
2.	Mr. Anderson was directed to arrange a meeting with the Program Policy and Structure Committee at a mutually convenient time at NELAC VI.	June 26, 2000

**PARTICIPANTS
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2000**

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